
World Water Day was observed internationally yesterday - not least in Latin America, and especially in Peru where almost eight million people live without access to running water and climate change looks set to make the resource even more scarce. Dan Collins reports:

Scientists predict Peru will be one of the three countries most **impacted** by climate change. The problems are largely geographic and **demographic**. Two thirds of the population live in the main cities on the desert coast with a tiny proportion of the nation's rainfall. They **rely heavily** on the fact that Peru is also home to seventy percent of the world's tropical **glaciers**.

Peru is also home to the second largest **swathe** of Amazon rainforest which is **under enormous pressure from** de-forestation and oil and gas exploration. Scientists say it's crucial to preserve it not only for Peru's water supply but for the global climate system. Researchers say half of Peru's main rivers are polluted, mostly by mining operations in the Andes Mountains. Add to this the ever more frequent El Nino phenomenon which **alternately** causes drought and flooding.

Peru is already **split between the haves and the have nots** when it comes to access to water and **conflicts are escalating**. In Lima many people in poor neighbourhoods pay up to ten times more for water than people living in middle class suburbs.

Dan Collins, BBC News, Lima

Vocabulary and definitions

impacted	influenced, affected (in a negative way)
demographic	to do with the quantity and characteristics of the people who live in a particular area
rely heavily	depend a lot
glaciers	a glacier is a large mass of constantly accumulating ice, usually found in mountain valleys, which moves slowly
swathe	here, a large area of land
under enormous pressure from	here, suffering from, seriously affected by (in a negative way)
alternately	when two different things happen one after the other in a continuing sequence
split between the haves and the have nots	here, refers to the fact that while some people in Peru have access to water, others don't
conflicts are escalating	people disagree with the current situation and they show it more often and with greater intensity

More on this story: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/7865603.stm>

From News about Britain:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/news/britain/water.shtml>

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2009/03/090323_witn_water.shtml